

❖ HM Queen's Visit to Hatfield House: Special Edition ❖



Having one of our own school groups sing for the Queen is not one of the things we imagined ever experiencing in our careers. It all started when Mr Moorhouse (Communications Manager at Hatfield House) paid a visit to school asking for a “rent-a-crowd” for the event. He was also keen to have some music, hence an introduction to us! We followed this up with our own Music Department “reccy” to Hatfield House on 14 May, and among discussions about the Queen’s route and what kind of spade she would use (Homebase, £14.99?), we agreed that the Vocal Ensemble would sing for Her Majesty as she planted a Jubilee commemoration tree.

Having broken the news to a speechless Vocal Ensemble, we had to get on preparing for the event, as well as two other external concerts at the end of the month! The piece selected was approved by Lord Salisbury (owner of Hatfield House) – *The Hills* by John Ireland, from the song cycle written for the Queen’s coronation *A Garland for the Queen*. Both

Mr Guinane and I were really impressed with how the Ensemble rose to the challenge of an intense rehearsal schedule and we always knew that they would perform brilliantly.

The day itself was exactly as the students described – it passed by in a blur. There was a huge amount of logistical planning which basically went out of the window when the Queen arrived and before we knew it, we were singing for her! I am not sure anyone actually really believed we would be as close as we got to the Queen yet there she was, a matter of metres away. Not only this, but at one point during the piece, the members of the Ensemble all broke into a lovely smile (such a joy to see when conducting) and afterwards I discovered that the Queen had stopped for a short time, listened to them and smiled and waved! Before we knew it, she had returned to her car and we were left wondering whether the whole thing had actually happened!

Ms Doan

The evening that followed on the Twittersphere can only be described as bonkers! We appeared on the BBC and ITV London news channels and made it into the local press too. It's amazing how people can express such excitement in fewer than 140 characters:

"We were just on ITV London tonight @BeaumontMusic !!!!!!!!!!"

"AMAAZZIINNGG! Just wish the stupid journalist would shut up so I could hear you all! #conductingthequeen"

"Miss Doan has some sick conducting skills now seen on tv!"

"Visiting a Kensington hotel, just seen a clip on the news with the Beaumont singers :) well done to you all on a fab day!"

"Need 2 TVs. Queenie visits Herts on BBC London at 19.20 #iknewyoubeforeyouwerefamous"

"Saw you on the news singing for the Queen. Vocal Ensemble sounding good, well done"

"Thank you so much for another insane day!!

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Ensemble publicly for not just singing beautifully, but also for their professional attitude towards this event and every other event this year. We still have four more events (see calendar) and it has been an absolute privilege to work with them on a school, local and national level. Well done and bring on the final leg of 2011-12!

Ms Doan

On 14 June Vocal Ensemble sang for the Queen. I remember sitting with Hannah Perryman on the grass and we were so excited. Everyone was taking pictures or craning their necks to try and see anything coming along the track, then suddenly a murmur of "she's here!" rippled through the crowd.

The schools around the edge of the rope started screaming and the steel pans were chiming away. Alex Wells, Year 12, was taking some amazing photos as the Queen, the actual Queen, stepped out of a massive car. My heart was in my mouth as we were signalled to stand up, I was so excited and nervous that I don't really remember singing! Another unbelievable moment was when she stopped for a bit to listen, and smiled at us; I'm sure everyone beamed back. Then, all too soon she waved, turned and retreated up the pathway; the whole moment seemed surreal until we had to rush back to our seats at the side. An incredible day, and a massive thank you to Beaumont Music for giving me another insane memory!

Chloe Haynes, Vocal Ensemble

The moment I was told I was singing to Her Majesty the Queen, I was speechless. We arrived at Hatfield House and rehearsed and waited for the Queen to arrive. We were the only choir, however many other schools came to see her too, as I remember it being extremely crowded. I had known for a while that we were going to sing to her, but when she arrived and started walking towards me, I could hardly breathe! I stood there in shock as Mrs Doan gave us a signal to stand and start singing. I rushed to my place and still couldn't believe it. For the whole two minutes we were singing, the grin on my face grew bigger and bigger, and my mouth started to ache! We sang while she planted an oak tree. Singing to the Queen of England is not something you do every day! It was a phenomenal experience and I enjoyed every minute of it. Thank you for the amazing opportunity!!

Megan Hodges, Vocal Ensemble



I had only been in the Vocal Ensemble for a few weeks when Miss Doan told us we were possibly going to sing for the Queen. When she told us it was really going to happen I was so excited that my first performance with the group would be to the Queen - how cool is that! We rehearsed loads which was always enjoyable. It all came together perfectly when Her Majesty was a matter of feet away planting a Jubilee tree as we sang. It was such a memorable day and I will remember my first performance in front of the Queen for ever!

Oliver Davies, Vocal Ensemble

I was honoured and delighted to be invited to meet Her Majesty the Queen at a reception in the Armoury at Hatfield House. The Queen met and spoke individually with all of us there representing different organisations and charities across Hertfordshire. I was introduced by Lord Salisbury who explained that I was the Headteacher at Beaumont, the school that provided the choir. I had to curtsy and say, "Your Majesty" and I then gave her a CD of the choir and a card from Beaumont. I introduced her to the group standing with me. The Queen was really natural in her conversation with us all and I found her to be a real inspiration. Looking back, the whole experience now seems rather surreal!

Mrs Hitch



It was a privilege to have the opportunity to be present at Hatfield House for the Queen's Jubilee visit and the planting of the tree. This event in history will be present for future generations with many visitors being able to see the tree and its plaque. The fact that I was there to see the planting myself and having never personally seen our monarch at such close quarters means I will treasure this memory for years to come.

Miss Green

My own daughter sang for the Queen as part of Soul Choir at Exeter University in May and I wanted to keep the Jubilee theme going in our family and see the Queen for the first time myself in the same significant year. I was delighted to fulfil this ambition and had a great day with our own Beaumont students who, as always, were a credit to the school.

Ms Beaumont

Seeing the Queen was a great experience. It was fantastic to see our Vocal Ensemble represent our school and impress her. The day was lovely as it was patriotic as well as sunny!

**Henry Clendon
Year 12**



I was delighted to be able to be a representative of Beaumont School at Hatfield House to witness the Queen planting a tree in Jubilee Wood, while the Vocal Ensemble serenaded her. A good number of years ago (!) Her Majesty, Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, then Chancellor of the University of London, presided at the ceremony in The Royal Albert Hall when I received my degree and it was naturally an occasion which I remember with great pleasure. I was therefore keen to be part of the local Jubilee celebrations this year, albeit in a minor way. I thoroughly enjoyed sharing the pupils' interest and excitement and was so pleased that the weather was kind to us!

Mrs Yapp

The Queen has been a constant presence in our lives. During my school days, we frequently sang "God Save the Queen". As a Brownie, Guide and now Guider, I have promised to "serve the Queen". Whenever I have travelled abroad, I have been asked about the Queen. So I was keen to have the opportunity to actually see the Queen. What struck me was the huge organisation required for even a very short visit. We had to wait for a few hours to see the Queen for only ten or fifteen minutes. This must be the same everywhere the Queen goes and she has to stick to a timetable which she probably doesn't decide herself. It must be a very strange existence! I think I will remember most the spontaneous applause and excitement when the Queen got out of the car. Everyone was thrilled to get a glimpse of this lady who has, after 60 years as monarch, is an iconic figure.

Mrs Lutz



I was very lucky to find myself going with Miss Doan and Mr Guinane and the Vocal Ensemble which meant hearing the music close to and a grandstand view of the Queen planting the tree. The students were amazingly calm and quite laid back until the moment the car pulled up and the Queen emerged and then, I think, it suddenly struck home just exactly who they were singing for and what an honour it was.

The memorable quote of the day has to be Miss Doan saying to the Ensemble "When the Queen arrives focus on me!!!" It was, of course, a very important instruction and essential for it all to go well but given the gravitas of the visitor and the uniqueness of the event it seemed amusing at the time.

As anyone who saw the television coverage will know the singing was beautiful and hopefully poignant for the Queen given the piece was originally written for her coronation. She smiled and waved at the students which thrilled them. It was all over very quickly but I am certain we will all have lifelong memories of the moment.

Mrs Jones

Apart from waiting quite a while, we did enjoy ourselves at the Queen's visit. The schools sat in a Union Jack formation; we were in the middle and luckily we had the best view! The Queen came and planted the tree, wearing a purple dress. The Beaumont Vocal Ensemble performed for her and a camera crew were recording it for television. Overall, we had fun and it was a memorable occasion.

Karan Mahatma 7S

It was a great day and I was delighted to be there. The Vocal Ensemble sang brilliantly for the Queen and it was a pleasure to listen to them.

Ms McCrorie

